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ABSTRACT

In the Netherlands, educational innovation related to community colleges has mostly emphasized enlarging the scale of the colleges, resulting in large regional educational centers serving 10,000 students or more. New demand on the educational process has also resulted in a growing examination of the role of the teacher in the classroom. At King William I College, the largest community college in the Netherlands, efforts are being made to change the traditional learning environment that casts teachers as authorities and students as digesters of facts moving through curricula as if on an assembly line. The college is implementing a system similar to the old medieval vocational training system, in which students learn by doing, and receive feedback from other students, from the materials with which they are working, as well as from the teacher. For example, the college's business department provides a simulated office in which students "work" in such departments as reception, purchasing, and customer service. Positive aspects of this effort have been that teachers and students have been exposed to new technologies, partnerships have arisen with industry, and lifelong learning at the college has been enhanced. Negative elements have included teachers' resistance to change, the absence of a corporate culture, and high costs. (BCY)

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**BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:
CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING NEW MODELS
FOR TEACHING**

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Biographical sketch of:

1. Yvonne Moerman-van Heel

- * Married, 3 children
- * Started as a teacher in primary school in 1963
- * In 1975 became a teacher in highschool
- * From 1985 up to 1992 I have been in a management position and since January 1992 vice-president at the King William I College, a college with some 14,000 enrolements a year
- * Responsible for 'themes' which is everything which has to do with both students and teachers
- * Also responsible for the innovation of the educational process in which Information technology plays a dominant role.

2. Coen Free

- * Married, 2 children
- * Started his career in education in 1972
- * Since 5 years president of the King William I College, the biggest Community College in the Netherlands
- * Also president of the Consortium for Innovation (sister organisation of the League for Innovation)
- * Member of the Dutch Education Council
- * He is quite a well-known author (history and poems)

Beyond the classroom: Creating and implementing new models for teaching.

Some weeks ago I read somewhere 'schools are not being designed, they just exist.' For generations all sorts of processes, often hard to define and understand have modelled them into their present shape. Perhaps this is one of the most important reasons why innovation in schools is such a time consuming and energy devouring process.

The past 20 years we have tried to innovate and solve the problems within the system without wondering if it was the system itself which should be seen as the cause for problems and stagnation.

The speed of change in modern society is so high that, if education wants to keep up the process of innovation should be undertaken thoroughly and executed according to plan.

The TQM-concept very well known here in the US, is an example of such an overall strategy.

This concept assumes that problems are considered to be caused by the system and not by mistakes, committed by teachers, pupils, parents or management.

In our country discussions on innovation in education emphasised on enlarging the scale of the colleges this would almost automatically lead to innovation. From 1990 onwards many mergers have taken place because of this perception. And right now we have big regional centres for education which have some 10,000 students or more.

Both adults and youngsters attend all sorts of courses, full-time, partime or in the apprenticeshipsystem, which is four days working / one day at school.

We also see that there is a growing tendency to expect from schools that they not only teach but also play an important role in educating the youngsters a task which for the greater part used to be undertaken by the parents at home.

The idea behind this is that school could perhaps help to annihilate social inequality.

We notice however that these plans and projects do not have the desired effects.

Psychological experiments have resulted in a growing interest in the process taking place in the classroom and the role of the teacher there.

As long as we cannot change this situation little or nothing will change.

The teacher will have to influence the learning activities of the students such that the learning process reaches an optimum.

The role the teacher plays is a crucial one.

He or she has the following options:

- a. He or she controls the learning process as much as possible.
Example: He tells a story and puts a scheme on the blackboard.
- b. He activates the learning process.
Example: He tells a story and the student, after having had an explanation draws the scheme himself.
- c. He does not control or activate but stimulates and supports.
The student does most of the learning at his own effort.

Conclusion: The more the teacher does, the less the student learns. The greater part of the teachers still have to grow from options a/b towards option c.

Where do we stand.

At our college this notion is the basis of our educational concept 'school 2000'. We believe that you should change the learning environment thoroughly which is most of the time the classroom with a dominant role of the teacher.

For our educational system still resembles the old system of mass production. Students move from form to form through a predesigned curriculum as if on an assembly line.

Each semester they learn the necessary facts and figures by heart.

Those who can memorize best and ask the least are being placed on a faster line; those who have the most problems in memorizing facts and behaviour are being placed on a slower one.

Finally the greater part of the students end up on a line with an average speed.

Standard testings are being executed in routine procedures measuring how many facts have been stuck in the heads and 'bad products' are removed from the line and sent back for repair.

Just like in the system of mass-production discipline and order are the ultimate.

And just like factory workers teachers have little influence on what they have to do at the various spots along the line.

They are supposed to follow the plans designed by specialists in the upper regions of the educational hierarchy sent to them by layers of civil servants from the department of education, inspectors and managers.

Time for a revolution though!

In our college we go back to the past so to say to the medieval system of vocational education: the master-pupil system: students learn by doing they get feedback on their doing from each other, from the materials with which they work and from their 'master', the teacher.

The tasks start at a simple level and develop from simple to complex. At the same time their responsibility increases. Thus, in a safe and protected surroundings, they are being prepared for their role in society. We simulate reality in order to train practical skills.

I have taken two examples which are being executed in our college and are exemplary for our philosophy.

Office-simulation.

In our business department we used to prepare our business students by offering them classes such as economics, communication, computing and statistics.

It is difficult for them to get a good picture of their future activities in a real job.

We took the decision to create our open-plan office of 50 m² where all kinds of activities that take place in reality are simulated.

Our office knows a few sections such as:

1. a reception;
2. the purchase department;
3. the selling department;
4. the customer's service;
5. the clerical department;
6. the secretarial department.

Instead of attending all sorts of classes our students have to go through all the various sections of the office and execute a series of tasks in order to acquire their knowledge. Thus they learn that an office is a network of people dependent on each other and together responsible for the job: keeping the office running.

A second example of learning by simulation is our project: Practical learning in a shop. An important element in preparing students for their work in a shop is teaching them how to deal with automation in various branches. We took food, fashion and do-it-yourself and teach the students what sort of systems they can meet with once they start working. In our simulation environment they learn how these systems work and what the possibilities are.

Pitfalls and Profits.

Of course we realise that the process we have started is a long and expensive one and I will try to share some of the most important experiences with you.

+ Professionals.

Our teachers are real professionals who, once they realise that changing pays, start co-operating enthusiastically and wholeheartedly most of the time. It is essential then that the working conditions are optimal.

+ Affinity with New Technologies.

The affinity with new technologies of our teachers is steadily growing. There is a huge gap between what is technically possible in supporting the learning process and what is actually being used in schools. If you provide the teachers with the essential tools and combine this with training, their affinity with new technologies increases. The students are more familiar with new technologies and adapt easily.

+ Education and Industry: Natural Partners.

Education and industry are natural partners who can and must benefit from each other. It is this idea we try to practise. Students get parts of their training in industry especially when highly expensive and sophisticated equipment is involved. We also train their employees when for example they have bought new equipment. This works both ways: our teachers keep up with the developments in industry and the school does not need to invest.

+ Occupational Life Cycle.

The occupational life cycle is decreasing which results in a necessity for people to practise lifelong learning. This is quite an opportunity for colleges, and forces teachers to change, not because the management wants it, but because society demands it.

- **Teachers' Culture.**

A big problem we are confronted with is **the culture of teaching.**

The teacher, in front of his classroom, is fairly autonomous in his kingdom.

What we, however, see is that this kingdom is also the source for isolation and tension. It is very difficult to make them realise this.

- **Teachers' Legal Status.**

The teachers' legal status is fairly fixed which makes it quite difficult to change things. We for example still know the last in - first out - principle resulting in a greying of the teams.

- **Corporate Culture.**

In order to remain succesful as a college we need reach a corporate culture.

Teachers must become entrepreneurs and contribute to their own job security.

- **Economic Situation.**

In Holland vocational education knows different forms, one of them is the apprenticeshipsystem but the strong link with the economic situation makes the system very vulnerable. If the economy is booming, students can be placed easily but in a period of recession we have lots of problems in placing them.

- **Costs Interactive Multi Media.**

Another major problem is the costs of interactive multi media.

The market for educational software is, because of the Dutch language, very small.

Publishers and industry are not eager to invest in for example CD-ROM or CDI productions.

- **Preconditions.**

We all realise that we are on the eve of a fundamental change in education but when you take a look inside our buildings you will see that the traditional classroom is still prominently present. Such an environment does not really inspire to change.

A lot of money is necessary in order to change the learning environment for we think that if you change this, the teacher will more easily change with it.

- **Infrastructure.**

Finally we have to face the problem of locations scattered all over town.

This makes it very difficult to work efficiently. Teachers and students have to commute which takes time and energy and also money.